

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2020

The President's News Conference

July 30, 2020

The President. Thank you very much. Let me begin by expressing our sadness at the passing of a wonderful man and a dear friend of mine, Herman Cain. He was a very special person. I got to know him very well. And unfortunately, he passed away from the thing called the China virus. And we send our prayers to Herman's great wife Gloria. Wonderful family.

And I have to say, America grieves for all of the 150,000 Americans who had their lives taken by this horrible, invisible enemy. We mourn their loss, as a nation; we mourn their loss, as people, as people that love one another. And we're working very hard to not only contain this horrible event, this horrible plague—it's what it is, is a plague—but also to come up with therapeutics and vaccines. And we're making a lot of strides.

All over the world, they're having tremendous problems. A resurgence has taken place in many countries that people thought were doing well. Despite a wide range of approaches to the pandemic between countries, this resurgence in cases is occurring throughout large portions of our planet—in Japan, China, Australia, Belgium, Spain, France, Germany, Hong Kong—places where they thought it was—they had really done great. It came back. And in a couple of cases, it came back very strongly.

The virus was said to be under control, but new cases have risen very significantly once again. So when you think somebody is doing well, sometimes, you have to hold your decision on that; you have to hold your statement.

Since the beginning of June, daily new cases have increased by a factor of 14 times in Israel; 35 times—that's 35 times—in Japan; and nearly 30 times in Australia, just to name a few. These were countries that were doing incredibly well; leadership was being praised. Latin America now leads the world in confirmed infections. And with the scarcity of testing in Latin America, the true numbers—you have no idea what they might be. And I can say "scarcity of testing." Almost anywhere, except for our country.

This disease is highly contagious and presents unique challenges to our border States. Meanwhile, States like California, Washington State, Maryland, Virginia, Nevada, Illinois, Oregon, and many others, they were thought to be doing well, and they had a big resurgence and were hit very hard.

And Governors that were extremely popular are not so popular anymore. They were held up as models to follow, and then they got hit and—now, I'm not even saying this is their fault. It's probably not their fault. It's just the way it is. That's the way it is. Highly infectious, one of the most infectious diseases that anybody has ever seen. Not since 1917, over a hundred years ago, has anyone seen anything like what we're witnessing now.

But these states have also seen the virus substantially rebound. And, again, no one is immune. No one is immune. These facts illustrate the imposing determinant—and it is a determinant—that a blanket shutdown to achieve a temporary reduction in cases is certainly not a viable long-term strategy for any country. People are starting to understand the disease now. We certainly have understood a lot about the disease that we didn't have any idea. We didn't—nobody ever saw anything like this.

The primary purpose of a shutdown was to flatten the curve, ensure sufficient hospital capacity, and develop effective treatments and therapies to reduce mortality. And we've done that. But it can come rearing back when you least suspect it.

We did the right thing initially. We saved millions of lives, what we did. We did the right thing. But a permanent shutdown would no longer be the answer at all. A small shutdown of certain areas—but we don't want to do that—small shutdowns can be very helpful, but not for long periods of time. We understand what we're dealing with now, but it's a very complex situation. And I can only say, thank Heaven that we are so advanced in what we're doing, in terms of vaccines and therapies.

We now know a great deal about the virus and how to treat it and who it targets. Almost half of the deaths come from less than 1 percent of our population. Think of it: Half of the deaths—really, a tremendous number—half of the deaths come from less than 1 percent of our population: those living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The average age of those who die from the illness is 78.

We've announced very strong measures to protect those who are most vulnerable. The scientific path forward is to protect those at highest risk, while allowing those at lower risk to carefully return to work and to school with appropriate precautions.

I'm once again urging the American people to protect their dear family and friends and anybody who's elderly, especially if somebody is elderly and they have heart problems, if they have certain illnesses. Diabetes is a very bad one, having to do with what we're discussing. But you want to protect the elderly and socially distance, wear a mask if you cannot socially distance, and practice vigorous hygiene.

Everyone, even healthy young people, should be taking extraordinary care to avoid infecting those at the highest risk from this terrible disease. The elderly and those with chronic health issues have to be protected.

In the current hotspots across the Sun Belt, the data is showing very encouraging signs. Arizona, in particular, has crossed an important threshold. For every person with the virus, we're now seeing an average of less than one additional person infected. And the numbers are coming down and coming down very substantially. They're starting to come down in Florida. Arizona is really leading away.

I was in Texas yesterday, and they're starting to come down significantly, we believe, in Texas. Need another few days to figure that one out, but it looks like they're coming down very significantly.

Earlier today I visited the Red Cross headquarters to discuss plasma therapy—which is a tremendous—a tremendous thing that they're looking at, and they have a lot of experience with it—potentially lifesaving treatments that infuse sick patients with powerful antibodies donated by those who have recovered successfully from this disease.

More than 2 million Americans have recovered from the virus, and today we're asking them to visit coronavirus.gov—coronavirus.gov—and volunteer to donate plasma. We need plasma. It's something that's been very effective, and we need plasma from those that were infected and successfully recovered, as most people do. Most people do.

Plasma is one of the many promising treatments my administration is accelerating. We've secured over 90 percent of the world's supply of remdesivir—which is terrific—an encouraging antiviral drug that can effectively block replication of the virus. We've also approved the use of the widely-available steroid—which has been very successful—dexamethasone, which has shown success, even in patients at more advanced stages of the disease.

On July 17, we announced a \$450 million agreement with Regeneron to build manufacturing plants and hundreds of thousands of doses of its antibody treatment, which is currently in late-stage clinical trials, moving along very rapidly. That's Regeneron.

As a result of such significant strides in treatment, the mortality rate in those over the age of 18 is 85-percent lower than it was just in April. So in a very short period of time. Think of that: Just 18—85-percent lower than it was in April. It's a big statement.

Now I want to provide an update on our efforts to ensure a strong economic comeback, including our negotiations on Capitol Hill. Throughout this crisis, my administration has taken the most aggressive action in history to rescue American workers. We love our American workers. And we've set records on job creation—records—2 months in a row.

We enacted a \$3 trillion economic relief package. The Paycheck Protection Program alone saved over 50 million jobs. We delivered \$300 billion to direct cash payments to Americans. We approved \$500 billion for our hardest hit industries—\$500 billion. We allowed struggling homeowners to reduce or defer their mortgage payments, and we put a nationwide moratorium on evictions from federally backed properties. It was a big thing, a very big thing. We also suspended student loan payments for 6 months, and we're looking to do that additionally and for additional periods of time.

As a result of these extraordinary steps by the administration, we added a record 7 million jobs in the 2 months past alone. To ensure this comeback continues, which we think it will—we had a great foundation to build on. We were the strongest country in the world; nobody close. We were outdoing everybody from China.

If you remember, for many years, you heard that in 2019, China would surpass the United States. Well, it didn't. We gained on them very significantly. We took it to a level that nobody has ever seen—2019, and we'll be back there very shortly. And it won't take very long, based on everything that we're seeing. It's not going to take very long. I think next year is going to be an excellent year, maybe one of our best years ever, from an economic standpoint.

We can never, ever forget the people that have been lost, and we never will. We'll never forget them; never forget what happened. This could have been stopped in China. They should have stopped it, and they didn't.

But I'm asking Congress to pass additional legislation to support Americans in need. First, we want a temporary extension of expanded unemployment benefits. This will provide a critical bridge for Americans who lost their jobs to the pandemic through no fault of their own. This was not anybody's fault. From the standpoint of jobs, it happened—a terrible thing happened. Could have been stopped. It happened.

I want to thank Senate Republicans for fighting to extend unemployment benefits today—in the face of very strong Democrat obstruction, which I'm surprised at—because this is great for our country, and it's great for our workers, and it wasn't our workers' fault.

Second, we're asking Democrats to work with us to find a solution that will temporarily stop evictions. We do not want people who have lost their jobs due to the virus to be evicted from their homes or apartments. We don't want that to happen.

Third, we need Democrats to join us to pass additional economic relief payments for American citizens, like the payments sent directly to 160 million Americans earlier this year, which was a tremendously successful program. This money will help millions of hard-working families get by.

My administration is also asking Democrats to work with us to pass \$105 billion to help schools safely reopen. Children are not [Children are]* at the lowest risk. If you look at what's going on: the younger, the better. Amazing—the immune system. For children, the lower they are in age, the lower the risk, in terms of the age group itself.

I tell the story that, in New Jersey, with thousands and thousands of people dying—sadly, dying—the Governor was telling me that only one—Phil Murphy—only one died under the age of 18. That's incredible. Where thousands of people that died in the State of New Jersey, one made an impact; one died under the age of 18.

Children are at the lowest risk of any age group from the virus. Indefinite school closures will inflict lasting harm to our Nation's children. We must follow the science and get students safely back to school, while protecting children, teachers, staff, and family. We have to remember that there's another side to this: Keeping them out of school and keeping work closed is causing death also. Economic harm, but it's causing death for different reasons. But death—probably more death.

If Governors do not want to open the public schools, the money should go to parents so they can send their children to the school of their choice. So we say if a school doesn't want to open or if a Governor doesn't want to open—maybe for a political reason and maybe not, but there is some of that going on—the money should go to the parents so they can send their children to the school of their choice. If schools stay closed, the money should follow the students so families are in control of decisions about their sons and daughters, about their children.

But to pass a bill, Democrats must reject the extreme, partisan voices in their party. They have tremendous voices. They're looking at November 3. And probably a day later, they'll say, "Let's open up the country." But the Democrats have to reject the extreme, partisan voices in their party so that we can get our country going even quicker than it's going right now. We have a lot opening, and we have a lot of States that you thought were doing pretty poorly, from the standpoint of the virus, and they're actually coming back very strong.

This pandemic has underscored the importance of economic policies that put American families and workers first. I got elected on the fact that I put America first. For many, many decades, in my opinion, we put America last. If you look at the crazy, horrible, disgraceful trade deals that we've watched for many years destroy our country—NAFTA, we terminated it. We have USMCA now, which is a great deal, and our farmers are doing really well despite the pandemic. But we put America first, America's families first, and America's workers first.

But that means bringing jobs and factories back to our shores, reducing unnecessary regulations, and creating new training opportunities for jobs and for the future. We've cut regulations at a level that no President has ever cut regulations. And we've cut taxes more than any President in the history of our country.

Americans always rise to the challenge, and we will emerge more resilient, more self-reliant, more independent, and more prosperous than ever before.

So I just want to thank you all. And if you'd like, we'll take a few questions.

Steve [Steve A. Holland, Reuters], please.

2020 Presidential Election/Absentee Voting Policies/Potential Voter Fraud Risks

Q. Are you going to launch an effort to try to delay the election? Or was that just a trial balloon this morning?

* White House correction.

The President. Well, what I want to explain to people, but it doesn't need much explanation—I mean, you look at article after article: "New York's Mail-Vote Disaster," "Tens of thousands of mail ballots have been tossed out in this year's primaries. What will happen in November?" It's a mess. This is done by Washington Post. Can you believe it? The Washington Post, of all papers. Fake news, but in this case, it's not fake, it's true.

This is done by the Wall Street Journal. Here's another one, "Vote-by-mail experiment reveals potential problems within postal voting system ahead in the November election." And you see what's happening with so many different places. They're doing even trial runs; they're a disaster.

And I don't want to see an election—you know, so many years, I've been watching elections. And they say the "projected winner" or the "winner of the election"—I don't want to see that take place in a week after November 3 or a month or, frankly, with litigation and everything else that can happen, years. Years. Or you never even know who won the election.

You're sending out hundreds of millions of universal, mail-in ballots—hundreds of millions. Where are they going? Who are they being sent to? It's common sense; you don't have to know anything about politics. And the Democrats know this. The Democrats know this, Steve.

So I want to see—I want an election and a result much, much more than you. I think we're doing very well. We have the same fake polls, but we have real polls. We're doing very well.

I just left Texas. And Biden came out against fracking. Well, that means Texas is going to be one of the most unemployed States in our country. That means Oklahoma, North Dakota, New Mexico are going to be a disaster. Ohio, Pennsylvania—disaster. No fracking.

I want to have the result of the election. I don't want to be waiting around for weeks and months. And literally, potentially—if you really did it right—years, because you'll never know.

These ballots are missing. You saw Paterson, New Jersey. You saw many other instances. There's tremendous litigation on that right now.

And that doesn't include absentee. Absentee is different. Absentee, you have to work and you have to send in for applications. You have to go through a whole procedure. Like, for instance, I'm an absentee voter because I can't be in Florida because I'm in Washington; I'm at the White House. So I'll be an absentee voter. We have a lot of absentee voters, and it works. So we're in favor of absentee, but it's much different than millions of people.

In California, they're going to send out tens of millions of voting forms. Well, where are they going to go? You read where postmen are in big trouble now. You read where city councils are in big trouble now. Voter fraud, all over the ballots.

So no, I want to get—I want to be standing, hopefully, hand held high, big victory, because we're doing things with our country that I think nobody else could have done. Our country is—despite this pandemic, which is devastating the rest of the world, by the way—devastating.

One of the articles that came out was, "The World's COVID Resurgence." This is the Wall Street Journal editorial, the main editorial yesterday in the Wall Street Journal. I don't always agree with them. But they have "The World's COVID Resurgence." "Countries hailed as models to see"—and then they go, the virus returns at a level it's never—they haven't even seen.

We've been giving praise to certain countries, and the virus has now come to them like the first time. But it's a very interesting—and it talks about many countries where everybody was holding them up and saying what a great job they did. Well, it's just one of those things. Didn't work out so well.

So we want to have an election. I'd love to see voter ID, but this is the opposite of voter ID. The Democrats love it; the Republicans hate it. We all agree that absentee voting is good. Mail-in ballots will lead to the greatest fraud.

You know, we talk about "Russia, Russia, Russia" for 2½ years, and then they found nothing, and there was nothing. But they talk "Russia, Russia, Russia." They talk China. They talk all of these countries. They say they get involved in our elections. This is easy. You can forge ballots. This is much easier for foreign countries.

Go ahead, Steve.

Q. But delaying the election is probably a nonstarter. I mean, wouldn't you agree with that?

The President. I just feel—I don't want a delay. I want to have the election. But I also don't want to have to wait for 3 months and then find out that the ballots are all missing and the election doesn't mean anything. That's what's going to happen, Steve. That's common sense, and everyone knows it. Smart people know it. Stupid people may not know it. And some people don't want to talk about it, but they know it.

And no, we want to have an election where people actually go in and—"What's your name?" "My name is so-and-so." Boom, you sign the book, like I've been doing for years.

It's very, very unfair to our country. If they do this, our country will be a laughingstock all over the world, because everyone knows it doesn't work.

How many ballots is he sending in California, as an example? Twenty-eight million or some massive number? Other States are sending out millions and millions of ballots. Well, they've done it. They had experiments. They had news organizations experimenting.

And look, read the story in the Washington Post about mail-in voting; it's a disaster. I'm very surprised to see that story, frankly, from them. The story is a disaster. So we're asking for a lot of trouble.

And no, do I want to see a date change? No. But I don't want to see a crooked election. This election will be the most rigged election in history if that happens.

John [John Roberts, Fox News].

2020 Presidential Election/Absentee Voting Policies

Q. So, Mr. President, you said that you don't want to see a delay in the election, but then it looks like the process of these mail-in ballots is going to continue to November the 3rd.

The President. Well, we have many court cases, John. We have one that's been filed for a while now in Western Pennsylvania, as an example, on mail-in ballots.

Q. So I'm just wondering, is——

The President. And by the way, John, we give tremendous examples, numbers of examples of all the fraud and all of the things that have taken place with respect to mail-in ballots.

Q. I'm just wondering, is the net effect of what you tweeted this morning and what you're talking about now to cast doubt on the results of the November 3 election?

The President. Well, it's had an interesting impact. I didn't know it was going to be the impact it had. What people are now looking at is: Am I right? But not me. Are all these stories right about the fact that these elections will be fraudulent, they'll be fixed, they'll be rigged? And everyone is looking at it, and a lot of people are saying, "You know, that probably will happen."

Please, Jennifer [Jennifer Jacobs, Bloomberg News].

Coronavirus Relief Legislation

Q. Mr. President, to break the logjam in Congress and to prevent that unemployment insurance from lapsing, what do you plan to put on the table tonight? What are you planning—

The President. Well, it's a great question. I can't tell you, though, because that wouldn't be very smart from a negotiating standpoint. But we'll be putting certain things on the table.

Q. Do you have a plan to put something on the table?

The President. We want to get money to people. It wasn't their fault. And we want to get money to people, and it has to be substantial. It's not their fault what happened.

The fact is, people don't like saying it—they know it's true—it's China's fault. Okay? It's not their fault. It's not the worker who lost his job; it's China's fault. And that's the way it is.

OAN, please.

Protests and Civil Unrest in Portland, Oregon/Deployment of Federal Law Enforcement Officers

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Yesterday DHS came to an agreement with the Governor of Oregon to remove Federal officers, and Oregon State troopers took over. Mayor Ted Wheeler was noticeably absent from that agreement. Are you confident, sir, that the State of Oregon will be able to quell the protests in Portland? And if the violence does continue, would you consider redeploying Federal troops?

The President. So our people have done—Homeland Security have done a fantastic job. They went to Oregon a little more than a week ago. The place was a mess. The city, Portland, was just a disaster. You see it, and a lot of people weren't reporting it right. They tried to pretend it was a protest, as opposed to anarchists and agitators. You understand what I'm saying. It's a mess.

They went there a short while ago, and they saved a Federal courthouse that costs hundreds of millions of dollars. And they put a ring around the courthouse, and they saved it. But the group that's there is basically meant to save buildings, and they were very strong, very powerful. And they didn't come out too often out of this cocoon that they built in order to save these very expensive, valuable, and psychologically important buildings—right?—like courthouses.

The Governor and the mayor, we've been dealing with them, and we think they don't know what they're doing, because this should not have been going on for 60 days. It's not our job unless, in case of emergency—which I consider now to be an emergency—it's not our job to go in and clean out the cities. That's supposed to be done by local law enforcement.

Yesterday the Governor worked a deal where they'll do it; we'll stand by, they'll do it—and that's good. That was very good, but she didn't report it that way. What she reported was totally different. She said, "I think Trump wants to take over the country." It's crazy.

So what happened is, our people are staying there to see whether or not they can do it today and tomorrow. And if they don't do it, we will send in the National Guard and we'll take care of it. And we're telling, right now, these protesters—and many should be arrested, because these are professional agitators, these are professional anarchists; these are people that hate our country. We're telling them, right now, that we're coming in very soon, the National Guard. A lot of people. A lot of very tough people. And these are not people that just have to guard the courthouse and save it. These are people that are allowed to go forward and do what they have to do. And I think that makes the Governor's job and the mayor's job a lot easier.

So they're working today and probably tomorrow to clean out this beehive of terrorists. And if they do it, I'm going to be very happy. And then, slowly, we can start to leave the city. If they don't do it, we'll be sending in the National Guard.

Please.

School Reopening Efforts

Q. Mr. Trump, given what's happening with Major League Baseball and now, today, the Rutgers football team is quarantined, how can you assure people that schools will be safely reopened?

The President. So can you assure anybody of anything? I do say, again: Young people are almost immune to this disease. The younger, the better, I guess. They're stronger. They're stronger. They have a stronger immune system. It's an incredible thing. Nobody has ever seen this before. Various types of flu will hurt young people more than older people.

But young people are almost immune. If you look at the percentage, it's a tiny percent of 1 percent. It's a tiny percent of 1 percent. So we have to have our schools open. We have to protect our teachers. We have to protect our elderly. But we do have to have our schools open.

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Yes, please. Go ahead.

Coronavirus Vaccine and Treatment Development

Q. Mr. President, a week ago, you said: "We are in the process of developing a strategy that's going to be very powerful," involving the coronavirus. Where is that strategy?

The President. Oh, I think you're seeing it, and I think you will see it. And one of the things that we've done that we're getting—and it hasn't been utilized fully yet—but we're all set to march when it comes to the vaccine.

We have great therapeutics that are testing very well, and we have great vaccines from incredible companies—Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer and Merck——

Q. But—[inaudible]—actually slowing the spread of the virus?

The President. ——and all of these great companies, and they're doing very well.

And the delivery system is all set, logistically. We have a general that—that's all he does, is deliver things, whether it's soldiers or other items. And I think you're going to see something that's going to be spectacular.

The FDA has approved things at a rate that's a tiny fraction of what it would cost—what it would take during a—another administration, let's say.

We are way ahead on vaccines, way ahead on therapeutics. And when we have it, we're all set up with our platforms to deliver them very, very quickly. The vaccines are doing well, the therapeutics are doing well, and we're all set to deliver them as soon as we have them, and that's going to be very soon.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:41 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room. In his remarks, he referred to businessman and commentator Herman Cain, who died due to complications from the coronavirus on July 30; 2020 Democratic Presidential candidate former

Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.; Gov. Gavin C. Newsom of California; Gov. Kate Brown of Oregon; Mayor Edward T. Wheeler of Portland; and Gen. Gustave F. Perna, USA, commanding general, U.S. Army Materiel Command, in his capacity as Chief Operating Officer of the Federal Government's interagency "Operation Warp Speed" coronavirus vaccine development program.

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